

## Medicare Rx Update: September 12, 2006

### Planning Medicare Part D Awareness ... for 2007

Tomorrow, Secretary Leavitt and Administrator McClellan will kickoff our Fall Medicare Awareness campaign, entitled, "My Health, My Medicare." Our goal is to reach all Medicare beneficiaries to make sure they know about Medicare's Preventive Services:

<http://www.medicare.gov/Publications/Pubs/pdf/11100.pdf>. However, the campaign is also designed to create awareness about the coming open enrollment period for Medicare Part D.

This campaign presents an opportunity for pharmacies to partner with CMS to discuss the many benefits of Medicare during annual flu shot events and other beneficiary outreach activities as we all prepare for Medicare Part D open enrollment, November 15 - December 31. A brief timeline of upcoming important events for pharmacists are attached (EOY Timelines.ppt). Specifically, pharmacies will want to be aware of the following events as beneficiaries will likely ask their pharmacist about what they receive:

- **LIS Re-determination.** The MMA requires CMS and SSA to determine whether beneficiaries who qualified for low-income subsidies (LIS) in 2006 will again qualify in 2007. Beneficiaries who don't automatically qualify for the LIS in 2007 will receive a letter from CMS that explains their pending loss of LIS eligibility and includes an application and an enclosed postage-paid return envelope. CMS will also send a letter to individuals who continue to qualify for the LIS in 2007, but will have a change in their co-pay level. Pharmacists will likely get requests for help from beneficiaries in returning forms pertaining to their LIS. Beneficiaries who no longer automatically qualify for extra help will receive the attached letter (Final un-redeemed letter 08-18-06.pdf) on blue paper beginning next week.
- **Annual Notice of Change (ANOC).** Part D Plans may begin sending ANOCs on October 1 and all Plans must ensure that members receive the ANOC with the Summary of Benefits (SB) by October 31, 2006. The ANOCs include specific changes in Medicare plan benefits, plan premiums and plan rules effective January 1, 2007. In particular, the model ANOCs contain information specific to the Medicare Part D benefit, open enrollment period limitations and important information for beneficiaries receiving extra help. Most Plans must include an abridged or comprehensive formulary with the mailing of their ANOC and SB. Plans have been strongly encouraged to use model documents, which can be found here:  
[http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PrescriptionDrugCovContra/07\\_RxContracting\\_Marketing.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PrescriptionDrugCovContra/07_RxContracting_Marketing.asp#TopOfPage)  
This is a good opportunity for pharmacists to review formulary and other changes with beneficiaries to make sure the plan continues to be the best plan for the beneficiary.
- **Plan Marketing.** Plans will begin disseminating 2007 marketing materials on October 1. All 2007 plan information, including pharmacy networks, will be available in the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder on October 12.  
<http://www.medicare.gov/MPDPF/Public/Include/DataSection/Questions/MPDPFIntro.asp?version=default&browser=IE%7C6%7CWinXP&language=English&defaultstatus=0&pagelist=Home&ViewType=Public&PDPYear=2006&MAPDYear=2006&MPDPF%5FMPPF%5FIntegrate=N>
- **Beneficiary Reassignment.** Dual eligible beneficiaries who are enrolled in either plans that are above their regional 2007 benchmark or plans that are dropping out of Part D entirely will be reassigned into a plan that is below the benchmark. CMS will mail notices to beneficiaries that are being reassigned during the week of October 30. We will

be sure to include a copy of the model letter to beneficiaries as soon as it is available to the public.

- **Early Enrollment.** All beneficiaries who are enrolling in or changing PDPs should be encouraged to do so as early as possible, but no later than December 8th to ensure that the beneficiary, Plans, pharmacies and CMS all have the correct Plan and subsidy level information in the system and ready for use by January 1.

CMS will be providing more information and materials to assist pharmacies with outreach in the coming weeks. With your help, we can make sure all beneficiaries get the information they need to make the right choice about their Medicare benefits. We look forward to working with you as we prepare for open enrollment.

**S. Lawrence Kocot**

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Sign up for the **PHARMACY\_MMA-L** list to receive the Medicare Rx Update at:  
<http://new.cms.hhs.gov/apps/maillinglists/>

# Preparing for 2007...Key Dates

## ■ September 2006

- Plans sign and return contracts to CMS
- CMS/SSA mails notices to beneficiaries who will either lose their deemed status in 2007 or who will be deemed in 2007 with a change in their co-pay level (Late September)
- Communications campaign for early enrollment (Late September)

## ■ October 2006

- Plan marketing begins (10/1)
- Plans send ANOC (with 2007 premium), summary of benefits and formulary to all current plan enrollees (Beginning 10/1)
- Terminating PDP/MA-PD's send notices to beneficiaries (10/2)
- All 2007 plan information available on 1-800-Medicare and [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov), including pricing and pharmacy network data (Plan Finder) (10/12)
- CMS mails beneficiary reassignment notices to duals (Week of 10/30)

# Preparing for 2007...Key Dates

## ■ November 2006

- Medicare & You handbook mailed to beneficiaries (Receipt in early November)
- Annual Election Period begins (Open Enrollment) (11-15)

## ■ December 2006

- Plans send enrollment confirmations to re-assignees (12/1)
- Annual Election Period ends (12/31)

## ■ January 2007

- Plan year 2007 begins (1/1)



<BENEFICIARY FULL NAME>  
<ADDRESS>  
<CITY STATE ZIP>

HICN <1234>  
<file creation date>

**Please keep this notice for your records.** You have been getting extra help from Medicare to pay some of your Medicare prescription drug coverage costs. You are getting this notice because starting January 1, 2007, **you will no longer automatically qualify** for this extra help. This means the costs for your Medicare prescription drug coverage may change. **However, because you may still qualify for the extra help, you can apply for that help to continue in 2007.**

You won't **automatically** qualify for extra help next year because you no longer


- qualify for Medicaid; or
- get help from your state Medicaid program to pay your Medicare Part A and/or Part B premiums (belong to a Medicare Savings Program); or
- get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits but not Medicaid.

If in the coming months your situation changes so that you again automatically qualify, we will send you another notice letting you know that you qualify.

### **What should I do to apply for extra help?**

If you have limited income and resources and think you may still qualify for extra help with your prescription drug costs, **you will need to apply and qualify** through Social Security or your State Medical Assistance (Medicaid) office. You can apply for extra help by filling out and mailing the application that is included with this notice.

You should apply as soon as possible to make sure that, if you qualify, you will get extra help starting January 1, 2007.

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**Para obtener una copia de esta aviso en español, llame GRATIS al 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). Los usuarios de TTY deben llamar al 1-877-486-2048.**

You may qualify if

- your yearly income is less than \$14,700 (single) or \$19,800 (married and living with your spouse), and
- your resources are less than \$11,500 (single) or \$23,000 (married and living with your spouse). Resources include your savings and stocks but not your home or car.

The above amounts are for 2006 and may change in 2007. If you live in Alaska or Hawaii, or pay at least half of the living expenses of dependent family members, income limits are higher.

### **Where can I get more information?**

If you have questions about filling out this application, please visit Social Security at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) on the web or call 1-800-772-1213. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778.

If you have questions about Medicare prescription drug coverage or the information in this notice, here are some resources:

- 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.
- “Medicare & You” handbook.
- [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) on the web.
- State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for free personalized health insurance counseling. See your “Medicare & You” handbook or call 1-800-MEDICARE for their telephone number.

If you think you received this notice because of an error, call 1-800-MEDICARE.

